

PORTLAND, OR – Today, Rep. Earl Blumenauer issued the following statement in advance of the July 1, 2011 40th anniversary of the ratification of the 26th amendment to the Constitution, which gave 18-year-olds the right to vote:

“Today is the 40th anniversary of the ratification of the 26th Amendment, giving 18-year-olds the right to vote. It is very meaningful for me as someone who led the state and national effort to make this possible, and it is what led me to a political career and an appreciation of the power that our democracy affords.

“It culminated with two years of work – including an unsuccessful election in Oregon to lower the voting age the year before, and involved people around America of all ages and walks of life. The fact that it was the fastest ratification in history enabled those of us working on the initiative to be able to witness the process from start to finish in an unprecedented fashion.

“As part of that Constitutional ratification process, I was privileged as a college student to testify before the United States Senate Judiciary Committee. As I concluded my testimony before Chairman Birch Bayh, I said, ‘Working together in support of this common goal, we are giving a preview to this type of coalition that is going to have to be established to deal with the tremendous environmental and social problems that confront us.’ I believed that then and I believe it now.”

“I hope people will reflect on extending this franchise to our young people 40 years ago as testimony to our belief in democracy and the power of our political system. Given that our problems have only become harder and more urgent, I hope some will be inspired by a commitment to the process of making our democracy work. We need every citizen.”